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## REVIEW

**Elementos de Español**, by Julian Moreno-Lacalle, Benj. H. Sanborn & Co., 1918. See *HISPANIA*, February, 1920.

Moreno-Lacalle's *Elementos de Español* is a book built upon a sound and simple theory—practice before precept, so we find a series of clearly-worded and smoothly-graded *textos*, each of which becomes the basis of a grammar lesson and the subject-matter of a number of constructive exercises. There is of course nothing new about this method, and one must look further for the causes of the book's practical success. For in spite of certain blemishes that have been fully exposed by diligent seekers after motes, the *Elementos* possess a strength and a quality that make them an admirable instrument for the teaching of first-year Spanish. That strength seems to lie in the nature of the *textos* themselves, their material and construction. They are Spanish of Spain, very evidently the work of one who knows his own language and his own people. Adorned with splashes of local color and sprinkled with historical and topical references, they give the teacher every chance to make modern studies what they should be, an introduction to the life and thought of a foreign people. Thus Lección XXIX can become the starting point for a five-minute talk on the *Don Quijote*, XXX would introduce the idea of provincial capitals and regionalism, and XL gives a glimpse of Spanish history.

But it is not the material of these *textos* that makes them such excellent teaching stuff. It is a *no sé qué* that holds the picture in the mind, the style perhaps, a something *simpático* in the manner of approach, the smooth run of phrase. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the *textos* begin to memorize themselves at the second or third reading and are therefore easy to work over in the appended exercises.

The *vocabulario* comes after the *texto*, placed there on the theory that the student's first effort should be directed towards the unaided comprehension of the passage. The present reviewer would like to see the alphabetical order of words in the short lists rejected in favor of a grouping on the basis of related use or meaning. Each *Lección* contains a paragraph of verb-drill, followed by a section of *gramática* in which rules are evolved from the examination of a number of typical cases. This method, while pedagogically sound, tends to make the book difficult to use as a reference grammar. A short appendix containing a summary of rules would be a welcome addition.

So much for the didactic part of the standard *lección*. The rest consists of a series of devices for fixing and testing, *conversación*, *preguntas de gramática*, *traducción*, *composición*, etc., all excellently planned and executed, but perhaps doing too much for the teacher, who might well be left to work out for himself the detail of this part of his task. In use, the *Elementos de Español* has proved to be a vivid and inspiring text-book.

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